

unbounded liberty, it will be at the same time with a most solemn commitment of himself to the divine mercy, which *they* forget, or were never instructed, to implore. And as to the vision of the other world, you will observe a great difference between the language of sublime poetry and that of revelation, in respect to the nature of the sentiments and triumphs of that world, and still more perhaps in respect to the associates with whom the departing spirit expects soon to mingle. The dying magnanimity of poetry anticipates high converse with the souls of heroes, and patriots, and perhaps philosophers; a Christian feels himself going, (I may accommodate the passage,) to "an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."*

In defence of those who have thus given attractions to the image of death by means foreign and opposite to the evangelical principles, it may be said, that many of the personages whom their scenes exhibit in the contemplation of death, or in the approach to it, were necessarily, from the age or country in which they lived or are feigned to have lived, unacquainted with Christianity ; and that therefore it would have been absurd to represent them as animated by Christian sentiments. Certainly, But then I ask, on what ground men of genius will justify themselves for *choosing*, with a view to the improvement of the heart, as they will profess, examples of which they cannot preserve the consistency, without making them pernicious ? Where is the conscience of that man, who is anxiously careful that every sentiment expressed by the historical or fictitious personage, in the fatal season, should be harmonious with every principle of the character,—but feels not the smallest concern about the consistency of selecting or creating the character itself, with his conviction of the absolute authority of the religion of Christ ? In glancing forward, he knows that his favourite is to die, and that he cannot die as a Christian ; yet he is to depart in a splendour of moral dignity. Would it not therefore be a dictate of conscience to warn his readers, that he expects to display the exit with a

* Hebrews xii. 22-24*